

[1st August 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

Braille plates for use by visually impaired at National Monuments

1199. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for preparing Braille plates for providing information about our national monuments for visually impaired persons;

(b) if so, by when and the places it would be implemented first;

(c) whether the HARK system has not worked successfully at Red Fort; and

(d) if so, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) There is no proposal at present in this regard.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

New areas identified for development as tourist places

1200. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the new areas identified for development as tourist places in the country;

(b) the progress made in this regard; and

(c) the details of measures taken by Government to promote tourism in such areas particularly in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The Department of Tourism, Government of India has identified 21 Travel Circuits, 12 Tourist destinations and 5 Special Tourism Areas in consultation with the State Governments for development of Tourism in the country.

(b) The Department of Tourism, Government of India has a

scheme to provide Central financial assistance every year for projects at places of Tourist interest identified in consultation with State Governments/UTs. During the first four years of 9th Plan, 1358 projects amounting to Rs.309.82 crores were sanctioned and an amount of Rs.116.99 crores released to the State Governments/UT Administrations in the country for development of tourism.

(c) During the first four years of the Ninth Plan, the Deptt. of Tourism, Govt. of India sanctioned an amount of Rs.12.77 crores as Central financial assistance for 55 projects for the State of Madhya Pradesh for various projects relating to development and promotion of tourism.

Organisation of River Darshan Festival in South

1201. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to organise River Darshan Festival in the South on the line of Sindhu Darshan festivals in Ladakh;

(b) if so, what are the places chosen for the festival; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to consider the desirability of organizing such festivals, as they help promotion of culture and tourism and also national integration?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Tourism has received a proposal to organise the Kaveri Darshan festival in Karnataka. The festival is to be organised by the Government of Karnataka with the support of the Centre. Government of Karnataka is working out the modalities of the festival.

(c) Does not arise.